NUMB. CCCXCVII.

The SPECTATOR.

——————Dolor ipſe diſertum
Fecerat—————— Ovid.

Thurſday, June 5. 1712.

AS the *Stoick* Philoſophers diſcard all Paſſions in general, they will not allow a Wiſe Man ſo much as to pity the Afflictions of another. If thou ſeeſt thy Friend in trouble, ſays *Epictetus*, thou may'ſt put on a Look of Sorrow, and condole with him, but take care that thy Sorrow be not real. The more rigid of this Sect would not comply ſo far as to ſhew even ſuch an outward Appearance of Grief; but when one told them of any Calamity that had befallen even the deareſt of their Acquaintance, would immediately reply, What is that to me? If you aggravated the Circumſtances of the Affliction, and ſhew'd how one Misfortune was followed by another, the Anſwer was ſtill, All this may be true, but what is it to me? For my own part, I am of Opinion Compaſſion does not only refine and civilize Human Nature, but has ſomething in it more pleaſing and agreeable than what can be met with in ſuch an indolent Happineſs, ſuch an Indifference to Mankind as that in which the *Stoicks* placed their Wiſdom. As Love is the most delightful Paſſion, Pity is nothing elſe but Love mixed by a degree of Sorrow: In ſhort, it is a kind of pleaſing Anguiſh, as well as generous Sympathy, that knits Mankind together, and blends them in the ſame common Lot.

Thoſe who have laid down Rules for Rhetorick or Poetry, adviſe the Writer to work himſelf up, if poſſible, to the pitch of Sorrow which he endeavours to produce in others. There are none therefore who ſtir up Pity ſo much as thoſe who indite their own Sufferings. Grief has a natural Eloquence belonging to it, and breaks out in more moving Sentiments than can be ſupplied by the fineſt Imagination. Nature on this occaſion dictates a thouſand Paſſionate things that cannot be ſupplied by Art.

It is for this Reaſon that the ſhort Speeches or Sentences which we often meet with in Hiſtories, make a deeper Impreſſion in the Mind of the Reader, than the moſt labour'd Strokes in a well written Tragedy. Truth and Matter of Fact ſets the Perſon actually before us in the one, whom Fiction places at a greater diſtance from us in the other. I do not remember to have ſeen any Ancient or Modern Story more affecting than a Letter of *Ann* of *Bologne*, Wife to King *Henry* the Eighth, and Mother to Queen *Elizabeth*, which is ſtill extant in the *Cotton* Library, as written by her own Hand.

Shakeſpear himſelf could not have made her talk in a Strain ſo ſuitable to her Condition and Character. One ſees in it the Expoſtulations of a ſlighted Lover, the Reſentments of an injured Woman, and the Sorrows of an impriſoned Queen. I need not acquaint my Reader that this Princeſs was then under Proſecution for Diſloyalty to the King's Bed, and that ſhe was afterwards publickly beheaded upon the ſame Account, though this Proſecution was believed by many to proceed, as ſhe her ſelf intimates, rather from the King's Love to *Jane Seymour*, than from any actual Crime in *Ann* of *Bologne*.

Queen Ann Boleyn's *laſt Letter to King* Henry.

SIR,

'YOUR Grace's Diſpleaſure, and my Impriſonment, are things *Cotton Libr. Otho C.* 10.
'ſo ſtrange unto me, as what to write,
'or what to excuſe, I am altogether ignorant.
'Whereas you ſend unto me (willing me to confeſs a Truth, and ſo obtain your Favour) by ſuch
'an one, whom you know to be mine ancient profeſſed Enemy, I no ſooner receiv'd this Meſſage
'by him, than I rightly conceiv'd your Meaning;
'and if, as you ſay, confeſſing a Truth indeed may
'procure my Safety, I ſhall with all Willingneſs and
'Duty perform your Command.

'But let not your Grace ever imagine, that your
'poor Wife will ever be brought to acknowledge
'a Fault, where not ſo much as a Thought there-
'of preceded. And to ſpeak a Truth, never Prince
'had Wife more Loyal in all Duty, and in all true
'Affection, than you have ever found in *Ann Bo-*
'*leyn*; with which Name and Place I could wil-
'lingly have contented my ſelf, if God, and your
'Grace's Pleaſure had been ſo pleaſed. Neither did
'I at any time ſo far forget my ſelf in my Exal-
'tation, or received Queenſhip, but that I always
'looked for ſuch an Alteration as now I find; for
'the Ground of my Preferment being on no ſurer
'Foundation than your Grace's Fancy, the leaſt Al-
'teration I knew was fit and ſufficient to draw that
'Fancy to ſome other Subject. You have choſen
'me, from a low Eſtate, to be your Queen and
'Companion, far beyond my Deſert or Deſire. If
'then you found me worthy of ſuch Honour, good
'your Grace let not any light Fancy, or bad Coun-
'ſel of mine Enemies, withdraw your Princely

'Favour

'Favour from me; neither let that Stain, that unworthy Stain, of a Disloyal Heart towards your good Grace, ever cast so foul a Blot on your most Dutiful Wife, and the Infant-Princess your Daughter. Try me, good King, but let me have a lawful Tryal, and let not my Sworn Enemies sit as my Accusers and Judges; Yea let me receive an open Tryal, for my Truth shall fear no open Shame; then shall you see either mine Innocency cleared, your Suspicion and Conscience satisfied, the Ignominy and Slander of the World stopped, or my Guilt openly declared. So that whatsoever God or you may determine of me, your Grace may be freed from an open Censure, and mine Offence being so lawfully proved, your Grace is at liberty both before God and Man, not only to Execute worthy Punishment on me as an unlawful Wife, but to follow your Affection, already setled on that Party, for whose sake I am now as I am, whose Name I could some good while since have pointed unto, your Grace being not ignorant of my Suspicion therein.

'But if you have already determined of me, and that not only my Death, but an Infamous Slander must bring you the enjoying of your desired Happiness; then I desire of God, that he will pardon your great Sin therein, and likewise mine Enemies, the Instruments thereof; and that he will not call you to a strict Account for your unprincely and cruel Usage of me, at his general Judgment Seat, where both you and my self must shortly appear, and in whose Judgment I doubt not (whatsoever the World may think of me) mine Innocence shall be openly known, and sufficiently cleared.

'My last and only Request shall be, that my self may only bear the Burthen of your Grace's Displeasure, and that it may not touch the innocent Souls of those poor Gentlemen, who (as I understand) are likewise in strait Imprisonment for my sake. If ever I have found Favour in your sight, if ever the Name of *Ann Boleyn* hath been pleasing in your Ears, then let me obtain this Request, and I will so leave to trouble your Grace any further, with mine earnest Prayers to the Trinity to have your Grace in his good keeping, and to direct you in all your Actions. From my doleful Prison in the *Tower*, this 6th of *May*;

Your most Loyal

and ever Faithful Wife,

Ann Boleyn.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

At the Desire of several Ladies of Quality.
For the Benefit of Mrs. Mills.
By Her Majesty's Company of Comedians,

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane, this present Thursday being the 5th Day of June, will be presented the Tragedy of Macbeth. The part of Macbeth by Mr. Mills, Macduff by Mr. Wilks, Banquo by Mr. Powell, Lenox by Mr. Booth. Hecate by Mr. Johnson, 1st Witch by Mr. Dogger, 2d Witch by Mr. Penkethman, 3d Witch by Mr. Bullock. To which will be added a Farce (of one Act only) call'd the Petticoat-Plotter. The principal Parts to be perform'd by Mr. Bullock, Mr. Norris, Mr. Pack, and Mr. Leigh. To begin exactly at Six, this being the last time of Acting till Whitson Monday.

Just Publish'd,

Miscellaneous Poems and Translations. By Mr. Dryden, Mr. Prior, Mr Smith of Christ-Church Oxon, Mr. Pope, Mr. Fenton, Mr. Cromwell, Mr. Broome of St. John's Cambridge. Chaucer's Characters, or the Introduction to the Canterbury Tales, The Miller of Trompington, or the Reve's Tale, from Chaucer. Both by Mr. Betterton. The Rape of the Locke, an Hero-Comical Poem. Printed for Bernard Lintott, at the Cross Keys between the two Temple Gates in Fleetstreet.

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Whereas John Prince, John Sadler, and William Jodrell, Mercers, at the Black Lyon in Kingstreet Covent Garden, have resolved to leave off the Mercers Trade, These are to give Notice, That at the said Shop are to be sold at very low Prices, all Sorts of the newest Fashion Gold and Silver Silks, and Satins Flowered, and plain Velvets, Silk Brocades, flowered and plain Satins, Damasks, Watered Tabbies Farendines and Mohairs, Shagreens, Sheenets, Persians, Silk Night Gowns, Thread Sattins, Poplins, Norwich Crapes, Silk and other Druggets. Hair and Worsted Cambletts, Hair Shags and Shaloons.

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